



Charge to the Shoreline Change Advisory Committee

October 10, 2007

SCDHEC-OCRM asks this Committee to identify and explore new ways to resolve use conflicts and reduce socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities related to shoreline changes in the South Carolina coastal zone. This will be accomplished by: 1) identifying research and information priorities; and 2) identifying and exploring options for improved management and planning for shoreline change.

Key Definitions/Scope

Shoreline Change: Physical and biological changes at the land/water interface attributable to: 1) natural shoreline processes and sea level rise; 2) coastal storms; and 3) human developments and alterations.

Geographic Scope: Beachfront and “sheltered” coastlines in the OCRM Critical Area (as defined in the OCRM Critical Area Regulations).

Range of Alternatives: This Advisory Committee may consider a wide range of potential options for improved management or planning for shoreline change, and its discussions should not necessarily be confined to the existing rules or authorities of DHEC or other agencies.

Policy options: This phrase is broadly intended to capture any new ideas related to policies, laws, regulations, planning approaches, strategies, program activities, etc. (for example, a policy option might address increased public outreach or education by DHEC or through other entities). Policy options should not attempt to develop specific language for any policy, regulation, or statute; rather, the option should explore general requirements, costs and benefits, other pros and cons, and relationships to existing programs. Policy options in the final report will be separated into two categories: those specific to DHEC-OCRM authorities/activities; and those related to other federal, state, regional, or local entities (if any).

Background

The South Carolina Beachfront Management Act and associated regulations were adopted in 1988, and followed closely the recommendations of a Blue Ribbon Committee on Beachfront Management. Over the past two decades, these rules have significantly limited development and hard stabilization of the beachfront in many areas. However, the issues addressed by the 1987 Committee remain critical. Shoreline development has continued to expand at a rapid pace. Renourishment has kept pace with erosion in many areas, but is costly and considered by many to be a medium-term solution to chronic erosion. As beachfront lots have become increasingly scarce, estuarine shorelines have become equally desirable for development. These shorelines face similar threats from erosion, sea level rise, and storm events, and create an increasing demand for erosion control structures and other alterations. Complex regulatory, economic, environmental, and legal issues, together with natural and socioeconomic data limitations, result in an unclear understanding of future shoreline changes in South Carolina, and our ability to adapt to those changes.